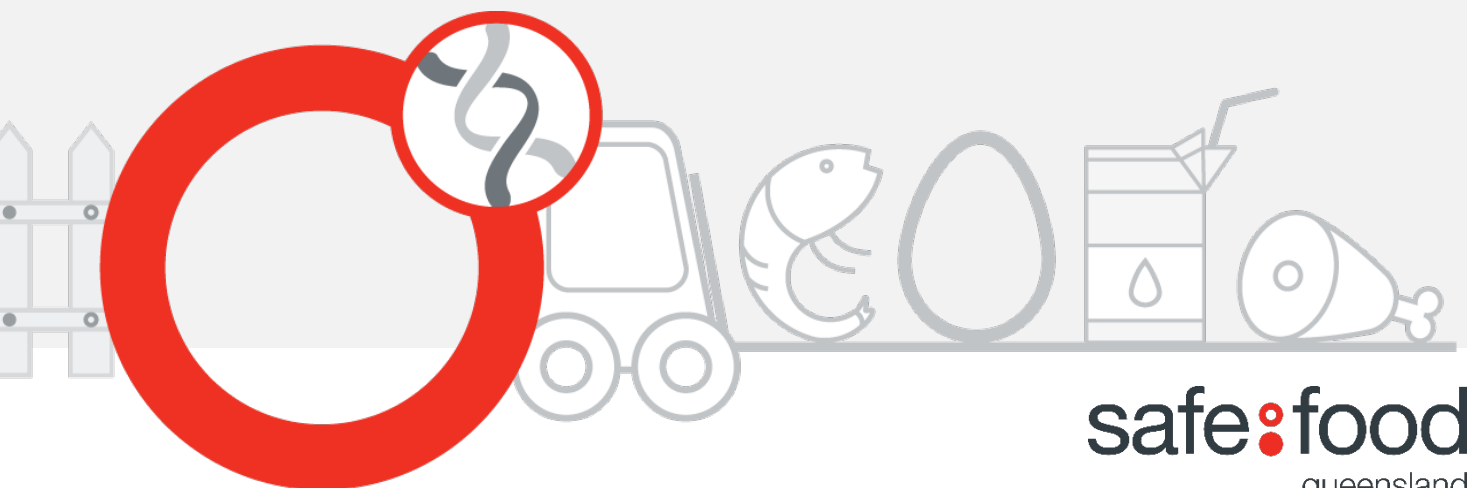

Response Protocol for a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 at a Red Meat Processing Establishment

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Safe Food Production Queensland





Document acceptance and authorisation

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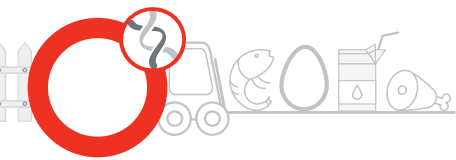
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Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to provide operational guidance for the coordination and management of a response to one or more confirmed COVID-19 cases (an outbreak) in a Queensland red meat processing establishment. The protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities of relevant parties, escalation procedures and expectations around information collection, sharing and timeframes.

This agreed protocol provides a framework that businesses can use to ensure that there is a consistent and efficient outbreak management approach. It will be used to inform Queensland Health and Public Health Units of management's risk response when investigating a positive COVID-19 case at a meat processing establishment.

Note: for the purpose of this document, the term 'business' relates to a red meat processing establishment, which includes Queensland accredited abattoirs under the *Food Production (Safety) Act 2000*.

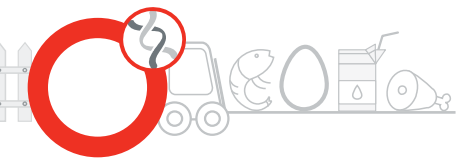
Objectives

The objectives of this protocol are to:

- ensure worker health and safety following the identification of one or more positive COVID-19 cases within a business workforce
- ensure actions are taken to quickly respond to, and manage the risk of spread of COVID-19 in the business workforce and within the broader community
- ensure efficient, open lines of communication; clarity of roles and responsibilities; and clear escalation points among/between health authorities, businesses, employees and regulators
- assist in facilitating continuity of business operations if there is:
 - low or isolated cases of community transmission
 - a staged temporary shut-down during low or isolated cases of community transmission while further evaluation (contact tracing) of workforce impacts are made
 - a staged shut-down of processing activities at the site for a minimum of 14 days or until active local community transmissions of COVID-19 is at a level the business and the PHU believes is manageable
- manage any ancillary issues such as animal welfare.

When to implement this protocol

This protocol is triggered when a positive COVID-19 case linked to a worker within a meat processing facility is identified. Each outbreak will differ according to the circumstances of the case. This protocol will focus on identifying and understanding the risks of the outbreak in the business at the earliest opportunity.



Definitions

Suspect case

When a person is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and in the preceding 14 days may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 (for example, has had contact with a person with COVID-19, has lived in or returned from an area where there is an elevated risk of exposure to COVID-19) and undertakes a test. As part of an accreditation holder's Food Safety and/or Workplace Health and Safety Plan, procedures should be in place to prevent staff that are sick presenting to the workplace. This includes ensuring that if a staff member is sick with any symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, they stay home and [get tested](#). Similarly, if someone reports sick during work hours, isolate them immediately and send them for a medical review and testing as appropriate.

A procedure and training shall be in place detailing the method for employees to notify the business if they are undertaking a COVID-19 test. Once they are tested, they are to [self-isolate](#) until the results are known. If the test is negative, they should remain away from the workplace and isolate at a nominated premises until their symptoms have resolved.

In the average Australian workplace, 50% of employees will have an acute respiratory infection each year. Using this as a rough indicator, employers can expect to have employees away from the workplace having tests for COVID-19. The culture in the workplace should encourage absenteeism and testing, even for mild symptoms.

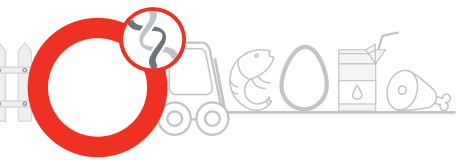
The business needs to have procedures in place to enable prompt contact tracing should an employee test positive for COVID-19 (a case). Timely provision of accurate information regarding worker movements will enable accurate identification of other workers who are close contacts of the case who may be required to quarantine. This particularly involves the identification of workers who have worked the same shifts, with sufficient detail regarding their movements to identify close contacts.

Case notification

A person who has undergone a test for COVID-19 will be advised of the results by the treating doctor, the fever clinic, or the laboratory that conducted the test, most times by SMS. However, positive test results are generally not transmitted by SMS. Workers may advise their employer directly of a positive test result. Staff should be encouraged to report test results to their employer. The business is encouraged to contact the relevant PHU and should contact other relevant agencies such as Safe Food and the Department of Agriculture Water and Environment (DAWE).

Public and private laboratories have mandatory reporting requirements for COVID-19 under the *Public Health Act 2005*, as it is a notifiable condition. This means that once a diagnosis of COVID-19 is confirmed, Queensland Health and the relevant PHU will be immediately notified by the laboratory to initiate a response. The PHU interviews the person with the positive test and identifies their movements during the exposure period (where were they when they were exposed to COVID-19) and their movements whilst infectious (contact tracing). The PHU would then contact the business. The PHU can only identify the person to the employer if the person gives their consent, so substantial effort is made to obtain that consent.

One or more positive cases of COVID-19 reported by a laboratory and confirmed by a PHU in a business would constitute an outbreak and trigger an outbreak management response. Following



the discussion with the PHU, the facility will be required to initiate their *Outbreak Management Plan*.

Infectious period

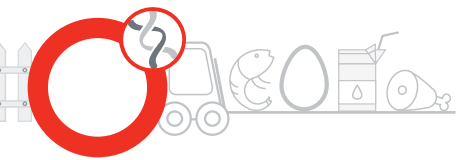
The PHU will advise the workplace of the period during which the case was infectious in the workplace. If there is any uncertainty, the PHU will work with the case and the workplace to refine and clarify the period where there may have been a risk of exposure to others in the facility. If further information arises, the PHU may amend this period. The person with COVID-19 is considered infectious for 2-3 days before onset of their symptoms or date of their test until they are cleared by the treating clinical team.

Close contacts

[Close contacts](#) as defined by the *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health* constitutes:

- face-to-face contact in any setting with a confirmed or probable case, for greater than 15 minutes cumulative over the course of a week, in the period extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case, or
- sharing of a closed space with a confirmed or probable case for a prolonged period (e.g. more than 2 hours) in the period extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case
- direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case
- direct care for a worker with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without appropriate infection control procedures and correctly applied Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

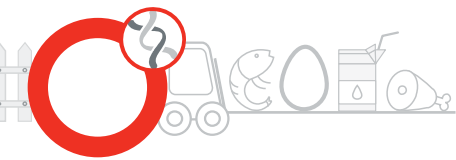
However, experience indicates that COVID-19 transmission has occurred within certain types of enclosed venues following shorter exposure periods than the generally accepted two hours. In these premises, transmission risk is likely to be increased due to poor physical distancing (<1.5 metres), direct physical contact, as well as environmental factors that enhance transmission, such as temperature and humidity. In considering risk of transmission from a confirmed case during the infectious period when they have been working in an enclosed environment, such as slaughter floor, boning rooms, cold store, distribution centres, a person may be considered a close contact despite not precisely fitting the close contact definitions. The exposure scenario and the controls in place to reduce transmission between workers will be taken into consideration by the PHU when assessing exposure risk.



Principles

The principles underpinning this protocol are:

- **Policies and procedures in place for protecting employees, the community and the business**
 - Employee and community health and safety are the highest priority in any response.
 - The business is primarily responsible for communicating to employees and relevant third-party providers about the risks and their management during the outbreak response.
- **Rapid response and decision making**
 - Decisions on the most appropriate procedures and safety controls to support the health and safety of employees during an outbreak are made in consultation with Queensland Public Health Units (PHUs).
 - Support the business and employees to respond to the outbreak, and to take immediate actions in response to an outbreak in accordance with the businesses *Health Management Plan* (HMP).
 - Management and supervisors should organise and implement actions within their defined roles and responsibilities rapidly and in coordination with Queensland Public Health Officers (PHOs).
 - Management must escalate issues during an outbreak at the earliest opportunity which may influence decisions made or mean that existing decisions need revision.
 - Management will work collaboratively with Queensland PHUs during an outbreak and remain focussed on reducing further exposure of employees, visitors or contractors and;
 - Provide information about any possible close contact occurring in the workplace and potential exposure points.
- **Timely information sharing and escalation points**
 - The initial stages of an outbreak (within the first 12-24hrs of case notification) will be particularly challenging. Therefore, it is vital that procedures and processes are rapidly agreed upon, to ensure information is shared between the business, Queensland PHOs, DAWE employees, visitors and contractors in a timely manner to coordinate the response.
 - Limitations to coordinating the agreed response must be raised early.
- **Business accountability**
 - Businesses should be aware of the current status of COVID-19 transmission within the community in which they operate and take the necessary actions to limit, as far as practicable, the impact of COVID-19 on the business' workforce.
 - Businesses will be guided by their HMP and any specific advice from the PHU to support the health and safety of employees.
 - Management of businesses are expected to prepare and maintain an up to date



HMP that addresses the latest health directives by the Chief Health Officer (CHO).

- Management will provide PHUs with the information they have gathered regarding employees, contractors and visitors who may be classed as close contacts and the decisions they have made to manage the risks in a timely and responsive manner (e.g. within two hours of notification) to allow appropriate decision making which supports the health and safety of employees, visitors and contractors. This information may be used to assist the PHU contact tracing actions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Queensland Department of Health

Role

- Provide strategic oversight to the relevant PHU and to provide support to ensure capacity to manage the outbreak, as required.

Tasks

- Support ability and capacity of the PHU to manage the outbreak.
- Facilitate access to personal protective equipment (PPE) for PHU's.
- Respond to media requests directed to the Queensland Department of Health.
- Notify Safe Food Production Queensland (Safe Food) and the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) as soon as they become aware an employee at an accredited business has returned a positive COVID-19 test result.
- Manage communication and updates regarding the status of a business to relevant regulators.

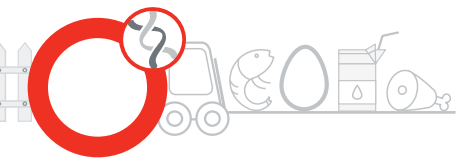
Local Public Health Unit (PHU)

Role

- Advise the business of their role in minimising the risk of transmission during an outbreak.
- Complete an evaluation of the risk decisions made by Management and issuing any legal directives.

Tasks

- Provide guidance and advice to support the business' compliance with their HMP and directives from the CHO.
- Respond to any identified compliance issues related to the HMP.
- Interview the case(s) and conduct contact tracing to identify close contacts and determine the length of quarantine required and quarantine conditions.
- Undertake an assessment of the risk of transmission within the workplace.
- In partnership with Queensland Health, advise on infection prevention and control measures, including identifying and isolating staff or others who are a confirmed case of



COVID-19 and quarantining close contacts of the case/s even if they initially return a negative COVID-19 result.

- Advise on testing requirements and where necessary facilitate cohort testing.
- Work with the business to resolve compliance issues and issue any legal directions for isolation and quarantine.
- Where required establish an *Outbreak Management Team* (OMT) in conjunction with the business and co-chair meetings (as practicable) of the OMT until the outbreak is closed.
- Regularly liaise with Queensland Health and seek support immediately where containment issues are identified.
- Provide a single point of contact (where practicable) to the business.
- Assist the business with communications with staff by providing letters, scripting for SMS, factsheets and other messaging as appropriate.
- Decide when an outbreak can be officially closed.

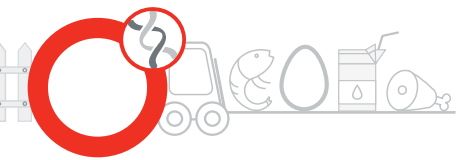
Meat Processing Establishment

Role

- Actively promote physical distancing, good hand and respiratory hygiene and increase appropriate cleaning of all common areas within the work environment
- Develop, maintain and register a HMP to ensure preparedness in the event of an outbreak, including engagement with the local PHU
- Lead and manage their response to the outbreak according to their HMP / Outbreak Management Plan and to support the health and safety of employees, visitors and contractors
- Regularly communicate with employees, DAWE On-Plant Veterinary Officer and Meat Safety Officers (if applicable), contractors, visitors and regulators. This will include updating these groups on any outbreak response activities.
- Liaise with the local PHU.

Tasks

- Notify and liaise with the local PHU.
- Maintain up to date and accessible logs of staff, contractors and visitors.
- Respond rapidly to PHU requests for information on staff, contractors and visitors who worked during the shifts when the case was considered infectious. The PHU will require full names, contact details including telephone numbers and email addresses (and residential address and dates of birth if held).
- Notify the DAWE Director Export Meat (if applicable) as soon as they become aware an employee has returned a positive COVID-19 test result.
- Immediately establish an Outbreak Management Team (OMT) in conjunction with the PHU and co-chair meetings of the OMT as required until the outbreak is closed.



- Update the HMP as new Health Directions are released.
- Assess staff resources detailed in the HMP and have a contingency plan for staffing in the event of significant workforce loss.
- Lead, direct, monitor and oversee outbreak response, informed by the PHU outbreak investigation.
- Advise PHU of progress in reconciling information relating to contact tracing.
- Implement infection, prevention and control measures, including:
 - Identifying and isolating staff who may have been exposed and could meet the definition of close contact in accordance with the sites HMP.
 - Instructing staff on appropriate use of PPE, hand and respiratory hygiene, and deep cleaning procedures.
 - Instituting infection control precautions.
 - Displaying visible signage throughout the workplace and entrance points regarding the outbreak.
 - Designating a COVID-19 Infection Control Officer to support adherence to infection control procedures including appropriate use of PPE etc.
 - Verifying that all essential employees entering the site during the outbreak response are trained in infection control including appropriate use of PPE etc.
- Restrict visitor and contactors access to minimal essential requirements. Non-essential visitors will be precluded from entry during an outbreak. Keep a log of all essential visitors entering the workplace, including areas of the site visited.
- Implement a timely and responsive COVID-19 communication policy with employees and their families.
- Liaise with the PHU prior to making announcements to media.

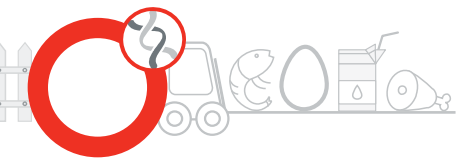
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Role

- Deliver regulatory activity to enable certification of compliance with Australian export legislation and overseas importing country market requirements.

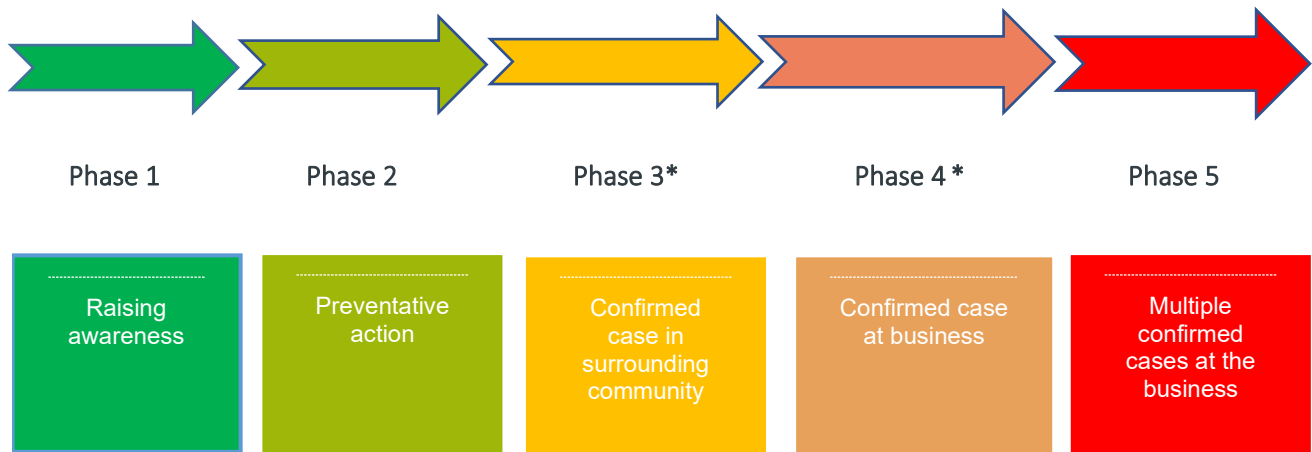
Tasks

- Work co-operatively with the Queensland Department of Health, PHU and the meat establishment to respond to a positive COVID-19 case at the establishment.
- Provide advice to the business on impacts of the COVID-19 response on product eligibility for export markets.
- Gather and provide information to the PHU about its employees required for contact tracing.
- Where possible, maintain the 1.5 metre physical distancing. This includes using their own amenities and office facilities provided at the establishment.



- Observe good personal hygiene practices.
- Comply with reasonable WHS measures implemented by the business such as non-invasive temperature checks and symptom screening prior to entry, and where they are not inconsistent with State and Commonwealth Departments of Health advice.

Joint Government and Industry Escalation Process and Preparation for a COVID-19 Incident in a Meat Processing Establishment

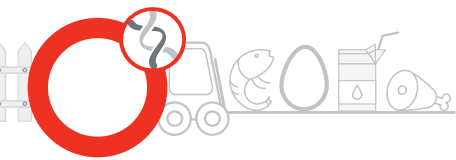


The response by government and industry to confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the community has been categorised into five phases as the severity and geographic distribution of COVID-19 clusters increases. Each successive higher level is built on implementing the actions in the lower level. The trigger for implementing each phase is based on the transmission of the virus at a local, state and national level.

*Phase 3 and Phase 4 may not occur in linear order and a confirmed case at a business may be the first confirmed case in the community.

This protocol is triggered when the response moves to Phase 4 - a confirmed case is identified within a business. However, it is expected that government, industry and businesses will undertake shared actions during Phases 1 to 3 to reduce the potential public health and workforce impacts on the community and individual businesses.

A summary of actions to be taken by relevant parties for Phases 4 and 5 are provide below. Specific, detailed actions are outlined under the Response Protocol section below.



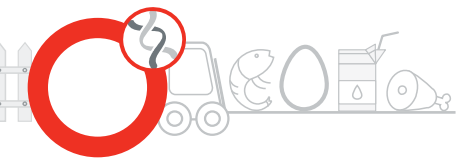
Phase 1 (Awareness) Identification of COVID-19 with human to human transmission in people returning from overseas.

Phase 2 (Preparation) Increased clusters of COVID-19 community cases reported in other states

Phase 3 (Implementation) Increased clusters of COVID-19 community cases reported in surrounding district or suburbs

Phase 4 (Business case) Direct impact - A positive COVID-19 case associated with a food processing establishment

- Notify PHU and follow clinical advice.
- Immediately implement the business's COVID-19 response Outbreak Management Plan.
- Prepare lists of staff, contractors and visitors to enable contact tracing by the PHU. based on the advice of the PHU in relation to when the case was infectious while at work.
- Immediately implement deep cleaning of work areas and pathways associated with the positive case/worker and [close contacts](#).
- In collaboration with the investigating PHU, communicate the possible exposure risk to:
 - employees identified by the PHU as close contacts
 - DAWE
 - remaining employees, contractors and visitors onsite
- Stay in regular contact with employees and families placed into self-isolation and quarantine.
- Facilitate/coordinate on-site testing of employees if this is required as part of the management plan outlined by the PHU.
- Ensure a shutdown protocol has been developed and finalise all processing activities onsite in accordance with Public Health Directions, if required.
- Notify all staff on site of the outbreak and any requirements outlined by the PHU for the management of the outbreak.
- Undertake assessment for all livestock remaining on the site to ensure all animal welfare requirements are complied with during the period of shut down.
- Consult with the PHU prior to releasing or making any media statements or sending correspondence to employees or their families.



Phase 5 (Multiple confirmed positive COVID-19 cases within a business)

Government, Industry and Processing Establishment Shared Actions

- Where multiple confirmed positive cases within a business are identified, the PHU in consultation with the OMT will decide whether the site will be placed into shutdown and will be guided by the businesses shut down protocol.
- The business will implement their business continuity plan.
- Further testing of employees at defined intervals will be undertaken in accordance with public health advice.
- In accordance with public health advice, allow only trained essential employees equipped with appropriate PPE to return to site to care for livestock, undertake critical infrastructure work, or perform essential maintenance in dedicated areas of the site.
- Business management should liaise with the local PHU regarding their plans for continuity of limited operations based on employee test results and the outcomes from an initial risk assessment undertaken jointly with Queensland Health.
- PHU conducts regular meetings with management of the site until the outbreak is closed.
- The business will remain closed (if risk assessment with PHU deems necessary) until approval to re-commence operations is provided by Queensland Health/PHUs.
- Queensland Health/PHU will notify the business, DAWE and Safe Food when it is safe to continue operations.
- Once approval is provided by Queensland Health to confirm it is safe to operate, the business will advise DAWE, Safe Food and all employees of their plans to ensure their safe return to work.

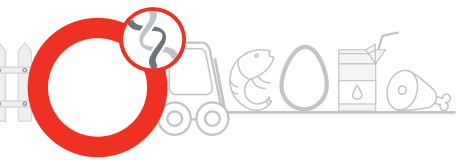
Trigger Events

Trigger events requiring escalation

It is expected the business, with support from the PHU, will lead the outbreak response, with support and advice from other parties as described above. The following issues are triggers that require decision making by the business and PHUs:

- a) A worker who is identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 detection in a member of the public not associated with the business (i.e. the worker has been quarantined)
- b) A worker with a family or household member who has tested positive for COVID-19
- c) A worker who is awaiting test results and comes from a community hot spot area
- d) A worker who has tested positive for COVID-19 (i.e. confirmed case)

This protocol is triggered in the event of (d) above. For all other triggers, which relate to Phases 1 to 3 of the Escalation Process, the worker will be considered a suspect case and the relevant PHU should ensure appropriate procedures are in place and actions taken by the business, as outlined below.



Response Protocol

The response to a positive case will vary depending on several circumstances, such as the number of community cases and/or level of community transmission, size of the business and location. The following steps indicate the response that a PHU will take at a meat processing facility if a staff member, contractor or visitor to the site is positive for COVID-19. Whilst these steps are sequentially listed, it is likely that a number of these steps will be conducted at the same time due to the urgent requirement to complete promptly.

1. Declare

The PHU advises the business that there is a COVID-19 outbreak due to notification of a positive case of COVID-19 within the workforce.

PHU Actions

A member of the PHU incident management team is to contact the business as per the details provided within the HMP and advise of the positive case.

Business Actions

Ensure that there is a contact phone number, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, that the PHU can contact. This same point of contact is to be made available to all staff to report test results outside of normal business hours. For a list of PHUs, refer to Appendix 4.

Supporting Documents

- HMP and contact details, regularly updated for any changes and submitted to the PHU. All industry and workplace plans should include a dedicated administrative liaison officer from the business to work with the PHU in the provision of timely, accurate information regarding staff, rosters, contractors, visitors etc.
- Records of training provided to staff informing them of their responsibility to notify the business when undergoing testing for COVID-19 and to report test results to the business.

2. Initiate

Stand up and initiate the OMT to activate the Outbreak Management Plan.

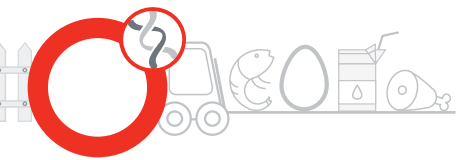
PHU Actions

The PHU incident management team to participate in the OMT.

Business Actions

The OMT will consist of key leadership roles and will be responsible for managing and overseeing the outbreak. They will be required to conduct a risk assessment of possible close contact exposure in the workplace, employee tracing and be able to promptly obtain documentation relating to staff, contractor and visitor movements. The OMT is to be comprised of a cross-section of skills in the business, as well as external stakeholders including (but not limited to):

- Plant management
- Work Health and Safety Co-ordinator
- Human Resources (or those with access to employee details)
- Communications / Marketing



- PHU
- Safe Food
- DAWE (where applicable)

There needs to be suitable continuity plans in place if a key member of the OMT is unavailable, tests positive or must quarantine. Reserve team members need to be adequately trained to ensure they have suitable skills and knowledge.

Supporting Documents

- OMP including key contact details for government agencies
- OMT contact details, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Training of OMT members and reserves

3. Identify

Close contacts are determined based on the PHU assessment of information provided by the confirmed case and the business to support contact tracing.

Safe Food has worked with the Agriculture Inter-governmental Working Group to develop a [COVID-19 Guideline for Reducing Workforce Impacts](#), as well as an [Impact Mitigation Program and Risk Matrix](#) to help businesses identify areas of risk and undertake their own risk assessment. In line with this approach the assessment of close contacts will consider the standard of COVID-19 management and infection controls employed by the business to maintain physical distancing either between individuals or workforce cohorts in accordance with the business's documented HMP.

PHU Actions

Commence contact tracing of the COVID-19 positive case/s. The PHU will provide the business with enough information to enable identification of areas where staff, contractors or visitors may have been at risk of exposure to the case while at the facility.

In order to make appropriate decisions and classification of close contacts, information/ evidence is to be obtained from the business including that listed in the Supporting Documents (below). Clear timeframes are to be given to the business on what is required and when they are expected to provide this information. Depending on the situation, a site inspection may be required to establish what people are implicated.

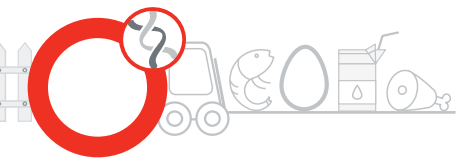
Once close contacts are identified an exposure assessment needs to be undertaken. The purpose of the exposure assessment is to determine each person's risk status based on their workplace activities, travel, social and living arrangements, and to identify who may be at higher risk of exposure to a confirmed case. As there are a number of preventative measures being applied in businesses, close contacts are to be assessed and the table on next page can be used as a guide to identify higher or lower risk groups and can assist in step 7 (restrict) when safely shutting down the site (if applicable).



Close Contact Exposure Guide*

Higher risk contact	Lower risk contact (this does not mean no risk)
<p>A worker who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> lives in the same household as the confirmed case <input type="checkbox"/> travelled in close proximity in a (bus/train/ car) with a person (within 1.5 metres) who later tests positive for COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> works in close proximity (within 1.5 metres) of the confirmed case or probable case for >15mins in total over the course of a week, without precautions such as, correctly applied personal protective equipment and appropriate infection control procedures. This period includes 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case <input type="checkbox"/> has shared an enclosed space with a probable or confirmed case for a prolonged period (e.g. more than 2 hours) over the course of a week extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case, without precautions, such as correctly applied personal protective equipment and appropriate infection control procedures <input type="checkbox"/> had prolonged >15mins close contact (< 1.5 metres) in total over the course of a week, with a probable or confirmed case during, work / meal breaks, in an office environment or during a social gathering over the course of a week. This period includes 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case 	<p>A worker who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> travelled in same vehicle (bus/train/ car) but was not within 1.5 metres and did not have a high-risk exposure due to additional precautions such as correctly applied PPE <input type="checkbox"/> did not have prolonged (>15mins) close contact (less than 1.5 metres) with a probable or confirmed case, cumulative over the course of a week in the period extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case <input type="checkbox"/> did not have prolonged (>2hrs) contact time in an enclosed space with a confirmed case over the course of a week extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case <input type="checkbox"/> works in close proximity (within 1.5 metres) of the confirmed case or probable case for >15mins in total over the course of a week, with precautions such as, correctly applied personal protective equipment and appropriate infection control procedures. This period includes 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case <input type="checkbox"/> had prolonged contact (>2hrs) in an enclosed environment with a probable or confirmed case in the course of a week extending from 48 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed or probable case and was wearing correctly applied personal protective equipment and practiced appropriate infection control procedures

*This categorization is provided as a guide only. The PHU will assess the exposure and other factors relating to cases and contacts to determine management.



Business Actions

Interrogate available information to identify which staff may have had contact with the confirmed case during their infectious period (as identified by the PHU). To allow for a rapid investigation, the business is to document how this process will be undertaken in the OMP. This is to include:

- who will be involved in this process (must include trained representatives of both management and workers)
- lines of communication to employees, the case/s, and PHU
- the employee tracing procedure and who will do this, noting that the PHU is responsible for contact tracing but this will rely on information provided by the business
- identifying essential OMT members
- materials, equipment, and supplies needed
- reporting forms and templates.

If staff are at work when the positive case is notified, close contacts are identified and assessed first as they are the ones with a higher risk profile. This also gives close contacts a chance to communicate to family and/or other close contacts of theirs at the earliest opportunity. The remainder of the workforce should then be made aware of the COVID-19 positive case/s. If the facility operates over two processing shifts and the positive case is employed on the second shift (e.g. has not yet attended work), contact tracing will identify close contacts and proceed to step 4 (isolate/quarantine) before the commencement of the later shift. After initial identification of close contacts, determine what other staff the close contacts may have been in contact with at the workplace and for how long.

If manual paper records are maintained, ensure these are readily accessible. It is important that in the event of a facility lockdown or that key members of the OMT must quarantine, that access to all the required information is available through remote means.

Supporting Documents

- SOP within the OMP for employee tracing (including who traces employees, what documents such as rosters are used etc).
- Close contact investigation report (Appendix 3).
- Sites organisation chart including names (not generic position titles).
- All employee contact details – phone number, residential address, date of birth, email.
- Shift roster – ensuring any movement of staff during the shift due to operational requirements is captured and updated on the roster.
- Workstation maps – displaying production line set-up and positioning of staff.
- Staff movement maps – displaying movement of staff through the facility. If work cohorts have been established, display clear segregation from other cohorts.
- Visitor and contractor logs – capturing all persons that visited the when the case was considered infectious (by the PHU). To include at least name, phone number and either email or physical address.
- Cleaning schedules for the areas the case visited while considered infectious and sign off records.



- Health screening checks / records for the same period.
- Staff Sick / Recreation / Special Leave reports.
- Training Registers / Logs for employees and contractors/visitors.

4. Isolate / Quarantine

Once close contacts have been identified and confirmed by the PHU, they are to be quarantined immediately if on site. If possible, close contacts will be tested on site, follow step 8 (transport) and quarantine at home for 14 days.

PHU Actions

After review of the information provided by the business in step 3 (Identify), close contacts are confirmed. As part of the contact tracing, the PHU will contact the individuals to advise them that they are confirmed close contacts of a confirmed case and advise of quarantine requirements. Other contacts will also be identified, and they will not require quarantine but be advised they are to monitor their health and self-isolate and seek testing if symptoms develop.

Higher risk close contacts will be interviewed by the PHU and given a direction by the PHU to quarantine for 14 days and undergo testing for COVID-19 as required. A negative test does not mean the person can return to work. A negative test result or absence of symptoms will not change the advice given for higher risk contacts to quarantine for the full 14 days because it is possible that the person's infection is not yet developed enough to be captured by the test or produce symptoms. For this reason, higher risk contacts are also tested on day 10 or later of their quarantine period. If testing at this point is refused, quarantine will be extended by another 10 days to ensure they are not positive, prior to them being released from quarantine.

Lower risk contacts: In some situations, individuals may be assessed as potentially having been in the vicinity of an individual with COVID-19, but they do not meet the definition of a close contact. A risk assessment based on information available will be undertaken by the PHU. This may result in some individuals being required to quarantine, but their overall risk of developing COVID-19 is such that, if they are essential workers, consideration may be given to the issuing of a Quarantine Notice with Conditions, enabling them to continue to work under strict conditions. The conditions will be articulated by the PHU. Risk assessment advice may change as the situation develops and conditions allowing persons in quarantine to continue to work may be revoked at any time based on new developments (e.g. further positive cases identified during outbreak investigation).

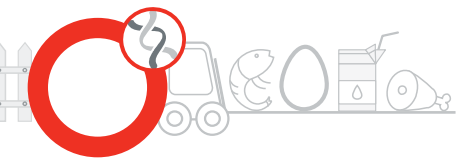
Based on workload at the workplace, it is recommended to assign lower risk close contact workers to other duties where possible that require less interaction with colleagues.

Business Actions

If close contacts are staff from another shift and/or have not yet attended the site, notify them to self-quarantine at home and wait for PHU advice (testing). A separate area of the site should be identified in the HMP that can be used to quarantine close contacts. The area must be able to be adequately sealed off from contact with other people on site. Multiple areas may be required dependent on the layout of the facility.

Supporting Documents

- Site map with quarantine / isolation zone identified.



- Records indicating who has been confirmed a close contact by the PHU.
- Records indicating who is in isolation or quarantine.

5. Test

Testing will be arranged in consultation with the PHU. There are several models used for large volume testing. The best approach to testing will vary depending on factors such as the location of the facility and the capacity of local private and public health service pathology providers.

PHU Actions

The PHU will determine who requires testing. Testing of symptomatic workers and close contacts will be prioritised as they pose the greatest risk of having or developing COVID-19. Once a person is identified as a close contact and tested for COVID-19, they are required to self-quarantine for 14 days irrespective of a negative test result.

Depending on the circumstances and the level of risk reduction measures in place at the business, it is possible that a direction will be given by the PHU for all staff, contractors and visitors to be tested. This is likely to be classed as a surveillance activity and the PHU will advise whether employees are required to self-quarantine in this instance pending their test result or whether they could return to work.

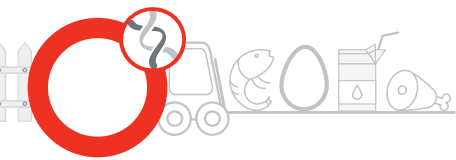
Under the Queensland governments COVID-19 rapid response, additional pop-up testing clinics may be established and/or existing clinic hours extended. If there is a large workforce present on site, there may be an opportunity for Queensland Health to mobilise a pop-up testing clinic to be set-up at the business. PHU / testing staff should ensure other health risks (e.g. Q fever) are appropriately considered prior to attending the site.

If the entire facility is tested, and there are no other cases identified within the first incubation period (14 days from identification of the first confirmed case), this may provide evidence of the effectiveness of the risk reduction measures in the workplace to prevent the spread of the virus. The work area in which the single positive case was interacting will be the focus of step 10 (Clean) and the remainder of the workforce can return to operations after approval from the PHU. However, if the initial testing of employees, contractors and visitors returns several positive cases and they are dispersed over a number of work cohorts, this indicates there has been potential transmission within the facility and existing prevention measures (inside or external to the business) were not sufficient to prevent transmission. As a result, all staff may need to quarantine for 14 days from their last day of exposure to a confirmed case or a date determined by the PHU.

Business Actions

During the initial phase of the PHU investigation, including the identification and testing of contacts, the business may not be able to operate if a significant proportion of the workforce is involved. Additionally, it may take up to a few days for test results to be known. As such, the business should take this into consideration when developing their *Return to Work Plan*. Employees should be encouraged to share the result of their test with the business, despite all test results being notified to Queensland Health and PHUs. Refer to Appendix 1 for a COVID-19 investigation workflow.

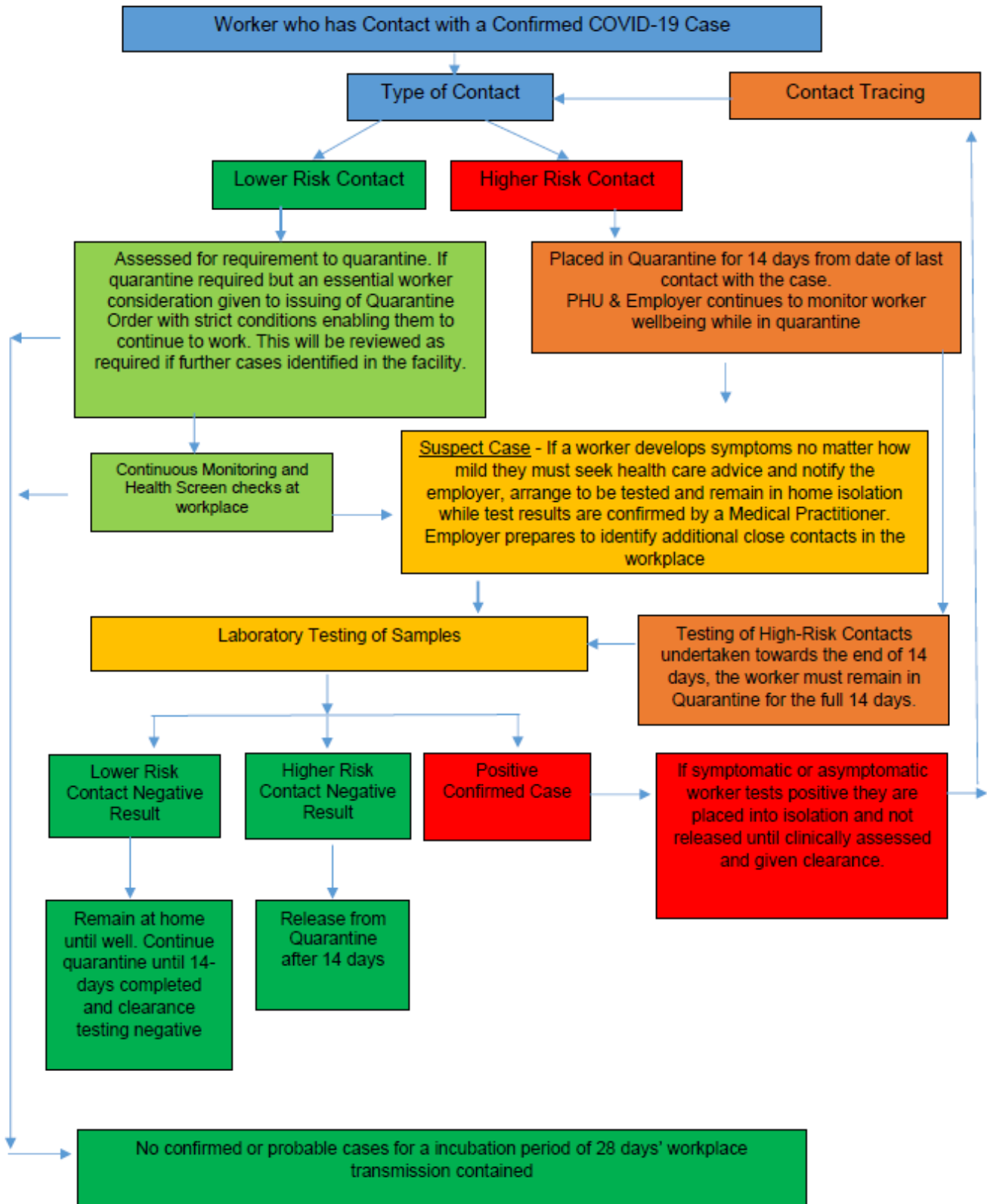
The OCP is to identify a possible location for a pop-up testing clinic on site, and if in an enclosed space, certain minimum requirements would need to be achieved (e.g. fully segregated area). If available, the car park may be the best location to allow people to drive through.

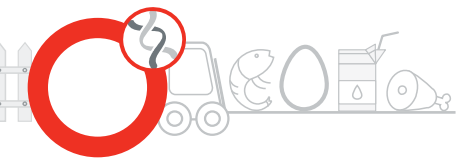


Supporting Documents

- Test results.
- Site map demonstrating possible location of pop-up testing area.

Flow chart for management of contacts





6. Enhance

The hierarchy of controls (elimination, engineering controls, administrative controls and PPE) should be used as a combined approach to assist in the prevention of disease transmission.

PHU Actions

Verify the effectiveness of enhanced infection control measures instituted since the case was identified, including the consideration/assessment of the impact of current measures on the risk of exposure of workers.

Provide advice on additional control measures which may be implemented to reduce the risk of exposure to workers.

Business Actions

Implement enhanced infection control strategies such as:

- PPE (e.g. face masks, clothing)
- Increased cleaning of high-touch and common areas
- Substitution of higher risk contacts for lower risk contacts

Ensure that staff receive ongoing training and are competent in the application of enhanced infection control strategies. For face masks, this includes how to put on and take off the mask and how it should be effectively worn to cover both the nose and mouth. It also includes frequency of replacement and how they are to be discarded, remembering hand hygiene is vital to prevent contamination and therefore the effective functioning of the PPE.

Supporting Documents

- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for use of enhanced infection controls. Utilisation of pictures within the SOP to visually demonstrate the controls (e.g. employee wearing a mask) as the PHU may not have experience in an abattoir environment.
- Training records for employees and contractor/visitors in the SOP.

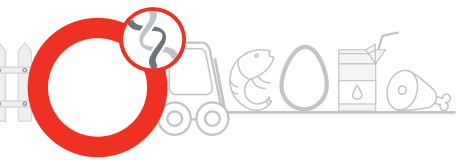
7. Restriction of Site Access and Shutdown

In the event of significant numbers of staff requiring testing and/or quarantine the site may have to restrict entry and exit. Shutdown of the processing facility may be required.

PHU Actions

Determine if the business is required to place restrictions on the site and whether shutdown of processing will be required. Consideration of the need for shutdown will be regularly reviewed based on available information about the extent of the outbreak and other factors such as: potential exposure across multiple areas of the facility; health and safety considerations; control measures in place and the effectiveness of control measures.

The shutdown of a facility requires time and the PHU needs to take this into consideration when undertaking investigation and advising on management strategies. For example, critical infrastructure such as waste treatment plants, rendering operations, refrigeration plants/chilling systems that run the entire site will require a staged shutdown and therefore will need people to



undertake those activities. To facilitate this, a risk assessment will be required to determine who is approved to remain on-site.

Where there are concerns regarding the capacity of the business to operate under their existing HMP if there is a high level of community transmission, the PHU may decide to allow the business to operate at a reduced workforce capacity to facilitate a temporary shutdown of the business while further analysis of the results from testing of higher risk contacts is completed.

Business Actions

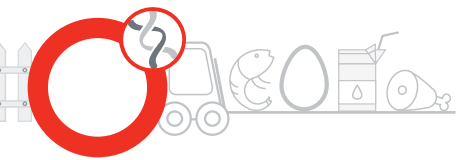
Control site access based on advice from the PHU. Rather than having many people leave the site to travel to testing stations and potentially put the community at risk from exposure, consideration may be given to retaining people on site until advice is sought from the PHU. If the facility can contain all staff, visitors and contractors (while quarantining identified close contacts), it may be possible that production activities can continue until on-site testing is available. If on-site testing is unavailable but site access has been restricted, staff may be transported to the nearest testing facility and then directly home. Noting that many facilities require time to prepare for a large influx of people for testing, allowing people to return home to quarantine until testing can be arranged may be required.

For those facilities that process livestock, there are broader animal welfare considerations to be evaluated. Early communication with livestock pick-up and delivery operations is essential such that the livestock volume on-site is reduced, and the shift can process the remaining stock in the time approved by the PHU before a potential site shutdown. Some animal species are less resilient and require just-in-time processing to occur. As such, where there is an indication that site access restrictions are required, the livestock needs to be managed before all staff leave the facility. This may mean that the livestock are slaughtered, eviscerated and placed into the chiller without additional further processing into portions or customer orders.

The OMP needs to identify if there are any critical services within the processing facility that are required to safely maintain the site and who needs to operate them. These can include items such as plant refrigeration, electrical boards, waste management (including rendering) and “engine drivers”. If the normal staff that maintain critical services are implicated as a close contact of the case and are quarantined, a procedure will be required if external contractors need to enter the site and undertake the tasks. If site access is required, the contractor would have to abide by the enhanced infection control strategies and other management strategies may be required for these staff, such as consideration of quarantine and testing, based on advice from the PHU.

Supporting Documents

- Site Access Restriction / shutdown SOP



8. Transport

Transport of contacts from the facility or testing if it is being conducted outside the business facility.

PHU Actions

N/A

Business Actions

Ensure that the person that has been notified that they must quarantine has appropriate transport to a location they can self-quarantine. Where possible, staff should use their personal mode of transport that they used to travel to work. Public transport is to be avoided as far as possible. If the person requires a taxi or ride share service, the business should obtain the driver details in the event the contact becomes a case and contact tracing is required. Staff using these services should maintain the enhanced infection control strategies and procedures including:

- wearing PPE (e.g. face mask)
- avoiding contact with the driver by sitting diagonally opposite in the back seat with windows down to allow external air circulation.
- Practicing good personal respiratory and hand hygiene

Supporting Documents

- SOP for transporting staff.
- Training records for the SOP

9. Communicate

Communicate to all internal and external stakeholders. The key to a swift response is to ensure that communication about the situation is clear and concise, accurate and specific for the necessary stakeholders.

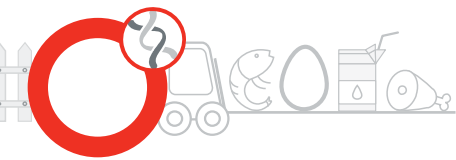
PHU Actions

The PHU will not discuss confidential patient/business information with the media unless it is absolutely necessary to inform contact tracing. However, several times throughout the pandemic, media outlets quickly become aware of a positive case and report its links to a food production business. There are times when contact tracing can be difficult and in order to raise awareness of the general public, a broadcast *Public Health Alert* is required. The CHO may also deem it necessary to inform the public during a media conference.

Business Actions

Ensure employees, contractors and visitors are aware of their responsibilities and there are clear and established communication channels to notify the business of any illness, no matter how mild. Communication is to include:

- not come to the site if they are unwell
- if they start to display symptoms in the workplace, they should isolate immediately as per the business HMP
- inform the business if they are advised by a Doctor to undergo COVID-19 testing
- inform the business immediately if they have tested positive for COVID-19.



English may not be the first language of some employees, contractors or visitors so the business needs to ensure that communication is multi-lingual where necessary.

To avoid the spread of misinformation and respect the privacy of employees who test positive for COVID-19, it's important to control the message being disseminated. Employees, contractors and visitors should be instructed not to speak to the media or post information about the situation on their personal social media accounts. All inquiries should be directed toward the nominated communications contact within the business.

A set of media statements is to be prepared outlining the steps the business has taken to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce and broader community. Any media statements are to be discussed with the PHU or Queensland Health prior to distribution to ensure consistency in messaging.

The OMT is to communicate regularly and meet daily and ensure that all actions are being documented. If the PHU or Safe Food is unable to attend a daily meeting of the OMT, updates are to be provided daily or as necessary through the duration of the declared outbreak.

Supporting Documents

- OMT meeting minutes.
- Pre-prepared media statements approved by the PHU/COVID-19 IMT.
- Queensland Health has a range of [free resources](#) in a number of languages that can be used in the workplace to make sure employees know how to stop the spread, and what to do if unwell.

10. Clean

Clean the facility.

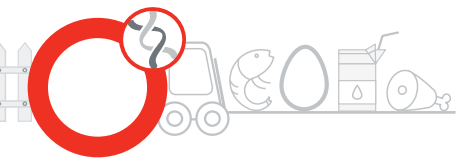
PHU Actions

Clean the facility in accordance with current [guidelines](#). Confirm the business SOP for cleaning as a result of a positive COVID-19 case is suitable. Verify that cleaning has been satisfactorily carried out.

Business Actions

Whilst food processing facilities will conduct cleaning and sanitation of production equipment on a daily basis, there are other non-food contact areas of the facility that will require additional cleaning. These include common areas such as lunchrooms, amenities, locker rooms, designated smoking areas, vending machines, handrails and other frequently touched surfaces and plant entry areas (handwash stations). Other production equipment that is frequently handled, but not cleaned as regularly can include control panels, light switches, keyboards, lock-out-tag-out equipment, maintenance tools, keys and cleaning equipment itself.

It is likely that cleaning will be undertaken when there is restricted site access. Therefore, ensure that cleaning staff have all the necessary PPE and controls to ensure they do not put themselves at additional risk of COVID-19 transmission. If uniforms are laundered off site, ensure the clothing supplier is aware there has been a positive COVID-19 case so that additional controls can be implemented at dirty laundry collection.



Supporting Documents

- SOP and training records for cleaning of areas / equipment, including what chemicals are used for sanitation.
- Cleaning records and verification checks.

11. Maintain

Ensure process control is maintained.

PHU Actions

N/A. Safe Food will handle food safety concerns if applicable.

Business Actions

Ensure process control is maintained and food safety risks continue to be managed. An outbreak of foodborne illness with people presenting to doctors or hospitals is an undesirable outcome if the health system is already under pressure. There will likely be an increased level of fear or uncertainty once the positive case is communicated. If the business has been approved by the PHU to continue processing, monitoring arrangements are to be maintained to the frequency described in the Food Safety Program (FSP). If livestock remain on site, ensure that they continue to be assessed to ensure all animal welfare requirements are compliant.

Supporting Documents

- FSP monitoring records.

12. Monitor

Continue to monitor the wellbeing of staff that have been quarantined as well as staff that may have returned to the workplace.

PHU Actions

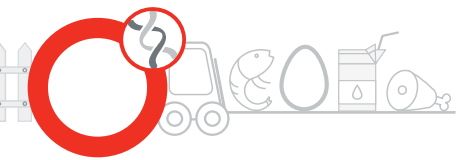
Clearance testing for quarantined individuals should be conducted towards the end of the quarantine period (generally between days 10 to 12) to verify they remain negative and can return to work. Further surveillance testing of the workplace may also be undertaken to confirm there are no asymptomatic people present. This is dependent on the number of positive case detections during the outbreak and level of community transmission.

Business Actions

If step 6 (Enhance) has been initiated, ensure monitoring for compliance with infection control measures is regularly done and documented. All the best intentions can be undone if staff are not complying with additional infection control measures or with basic hygiene procedures.

Supporting Documents

- Day 10 to 12 of quarantine test results.
- Surveillance testing results.
- Results of compliance verification on infection controls.



13. Support

PHU Actions

Support the business and provide technical direction and/or advice.

Business Actions

Ensure there is adequate support for all staff during the response period. If close contacts are required to quarantine, they may be casual employees that require an income to support themselves or their family.

Supporting Documents

N/A

14. Re-commence

Production operations re-commence if there are no new cases within 14 days (incubation period) following the date of the last positive case, or as advised by the PHU.

PHU Actions

The COVID-19 outbreak is declared over after the OMT consult and formally confirm the status with the PHU. If another COVID-19 positive case is detected after the outbreak is declared over, the response protocol would be re-initiated.

The decision for the business to return to normal operations will be based on workforce availability once a thorough risk assessment has been conducted and verified by the PHU to determine the status of workers identified as close contacts.

Where there are concerns regarding the capacity of the business to operate under their existing HMP based on a high level of community transmission, the PHU may decide to allow the business to operate at a reduced workforce capacity to facilitate a temporary shutdown of the business while further analysis of the results from testing of higher risk contacts is completed. The decision to recommence operations after a temporary shutdown will be made in consultation with the PHU. This approval will be considered once the community transmission of COVID-19 is at a level the business believes is manageable under their revised HMP.

Business Actions

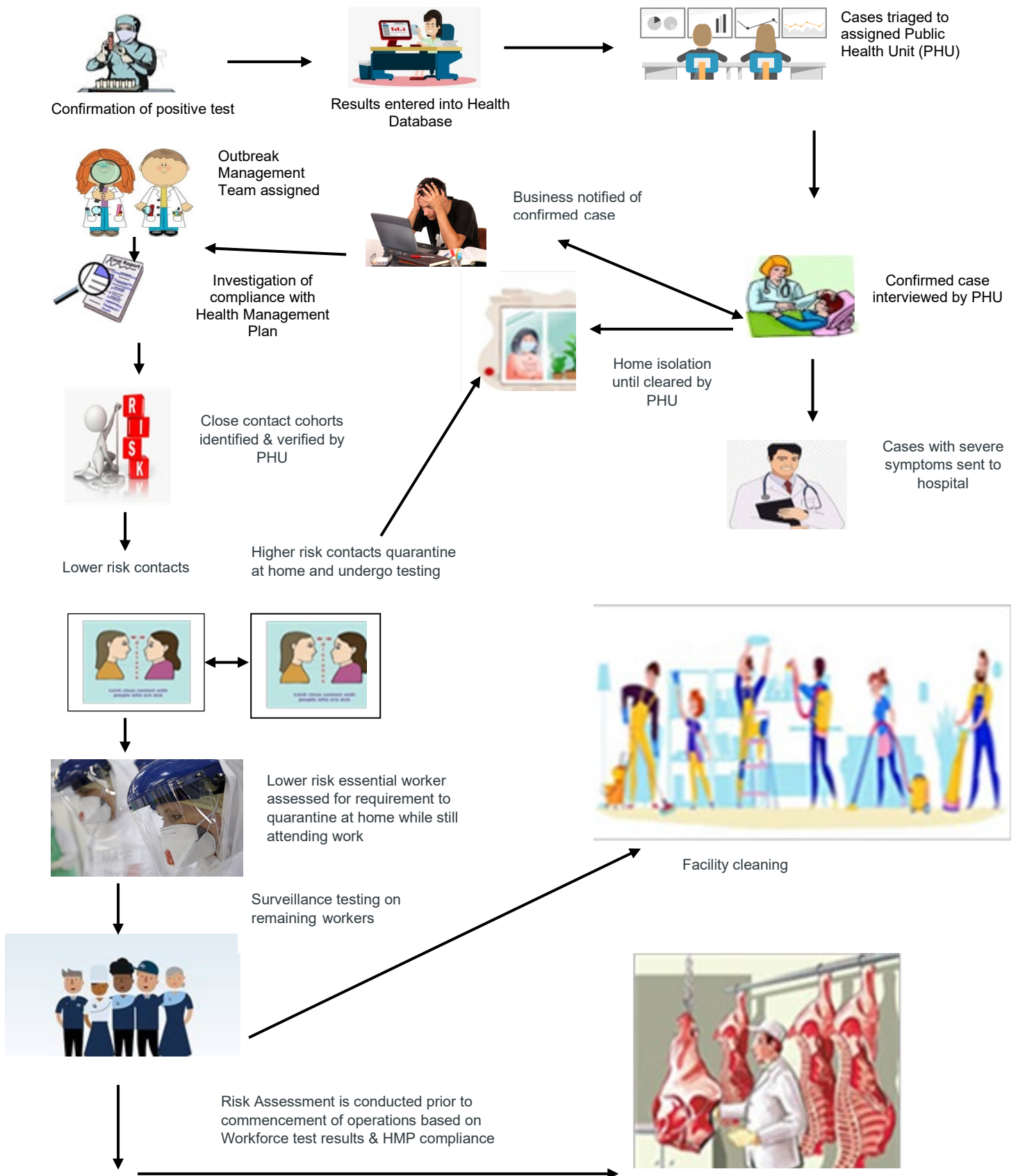
The OMT should hold a debrief once the outbreak has been declared over and ensure all information is accurately documented and filed in case it is required in the future. A review and evaluation of the response is conducted to identify if there are any opportunities for improvement. Depending on the level of community cases, the business might decide to continue following enhanced infection control strategies (e.g. wearing face masks, respiratory hygiene and increased cleaning).

Supporting Documents

- OMT closing meeting minutes declaring the outbreak is over
- Documented PHU authorisation to recommence processing



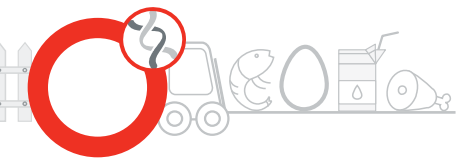
APPENDIX 1: COVID-19 Investigation Workflow





APPENDIX 2a: Response Protocol Summary

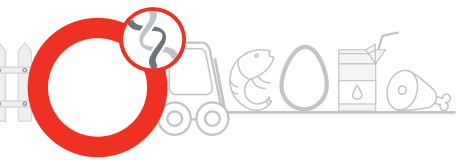
1. Declare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outbreak declared due to positive case of COVID-19• 24/7 contact available
2. Initiate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stand up Outbreak Management Team (OMT)• Cross section of business skills and are trained in the Outbreak Management Plan (OMP)• Continuity plans if OMT member tests positive
3. Identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commence contact tracing• Identify close and casual contacts• Prepare documentation (employee contacts, shift roster, work place maps)
4. Isolate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate close contacts• Close contacts to quarantine for 14 days• Area available in the facility for isolation
5. Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test close contacts immediately• Test remaining staff• Self-isolate until test results are known• Determine if on-site testing is possible
6. Enhance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement enhanced infection controls• Ensure staff are trained (e.g. PPE)
7. Restrict	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lockdown the site and prevent entry and exit• Ensure inputs (e.g. livestock transport) are notified to cease• OMP identify critical services and external contractors to maintain facility
8. Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport close contacts to medical centre for testing• Avoid using public transport• Procedure documented and trained for taxi / ride share services if needed
9. Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal and external• Timely, clear, concise, and accurate• Recommend staff avoid posting on social media• Prepare media statements
10. Clean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct clean• Non-food contact areas (e.g. common areas, amenities, control panels)• Ensure cleaning staff have adequate PPE
11. Maintain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain process control• Continue conducting production monitoring, including animal welfare
12. Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check on staff wellbeing in quarantine and at work• Quarantine staff to be retested at day 11• Further surveillance testing of the workforce
13. Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure support is available for staff during the outbreak• Casual employees may be more impacted in a facility lockdown
14. Re-commence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No new cases within 14 days of the last positive case• Declare outbreak over in consultation with PHU and OMT• OMT to debrief and review outbreak



APPENDIX 2b: Response Protocol Flow Chart

This flow chart illustrates the structured steps that would be implemented in response to a confirmed case of COVID-19 and can be used to identify priority actions. This may also be beneficial to inform the business' Outbreak Management Plan and delegation of tasks within the Outbreak Management Team.



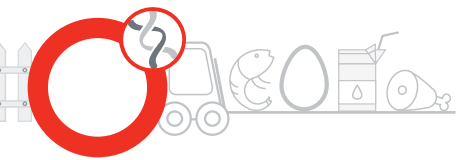


APPENDIX 3: Close Contact Investigation Report

To enable timely investigation and implementation of management actions in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 in a meat processing facility the employer should be able to supply the following information at a minimum:

General Information Relating to the Facility and Workforce

- The business's work force production model highlighting how cohorts are broken down to facilitate physical distancing in the workplace. This should be supported by a site map and site layouts showing where cohorts are located and people flows / traffic flow in and out of each area.
- The workforce profile for the business, number of employees, permanent, casual, part-time contract, use of labour hire, number of at-risk employees, number of trained or qualified staff with COVID-19 skills and knowledge onsite.
- General workforce information:
 - the full name, date of birth, phone number, email contact and current residential address of all employees
 - the full name, date of birth, phone number, email contact and current residential address of all visitors and contractors who have been onsite during the case/s infectious period (as provided by the PHU)
- Records of:
 - compliance with HMP procedures and policies
 - daily health screening checks
 - staff rosters for each department, shift, changes in worker rotations
- Employee information including:
 - health screen checks
 - rosters
- What protective clothing are worn by those in each area of the business.
 - Livestock management
 - Drivers
 - Maintenance
 - Distribution
 - Slaughter floor and Boning Room
 - Rendering / Waste
- Training logs –
 - What training staff have received in personal hygiene
 - application and appropriate use of PPE
- What cleaning schedules and checks are undertaken to support work cohort separation
- The traffic flow / walk path around the workplace
- What workplace stoppages or breakdowns occurred during the infectious period of the case/s



Specific Information relating to the Case/s and Contacts

- Employee information which may be requested includes:
 - health screen checks
 - what time they start work
 - what time they finish work
 - areas or department of the business did they work
 - if at work when they started to display symptoms
- Employee transport to and from work:
 - Private transport
 - carpool
 - taxi / ride share
 - public transport
 - Other
- Who do they work besides, or next to.
- What team do they work in.
- Duration of exposure to others.
- What cleaning schedules and checks are undertaken to support work cohort separation.
- Are there other workers who are on sick leave from the confirmed case's work cohort.
- Who they have lunch with.
- The positive workers activity history when considered infectious.
- What workplace meetings did they attend.
- What maintenance work was undertaken in their designated work area.
- What QA and Supervisors had close contact with the confirmed case during the infectious period.
- What vulnerable workers work in close proximity with the confirmed case.
- What family members or relatives of the confirmed case also work at the establishment.



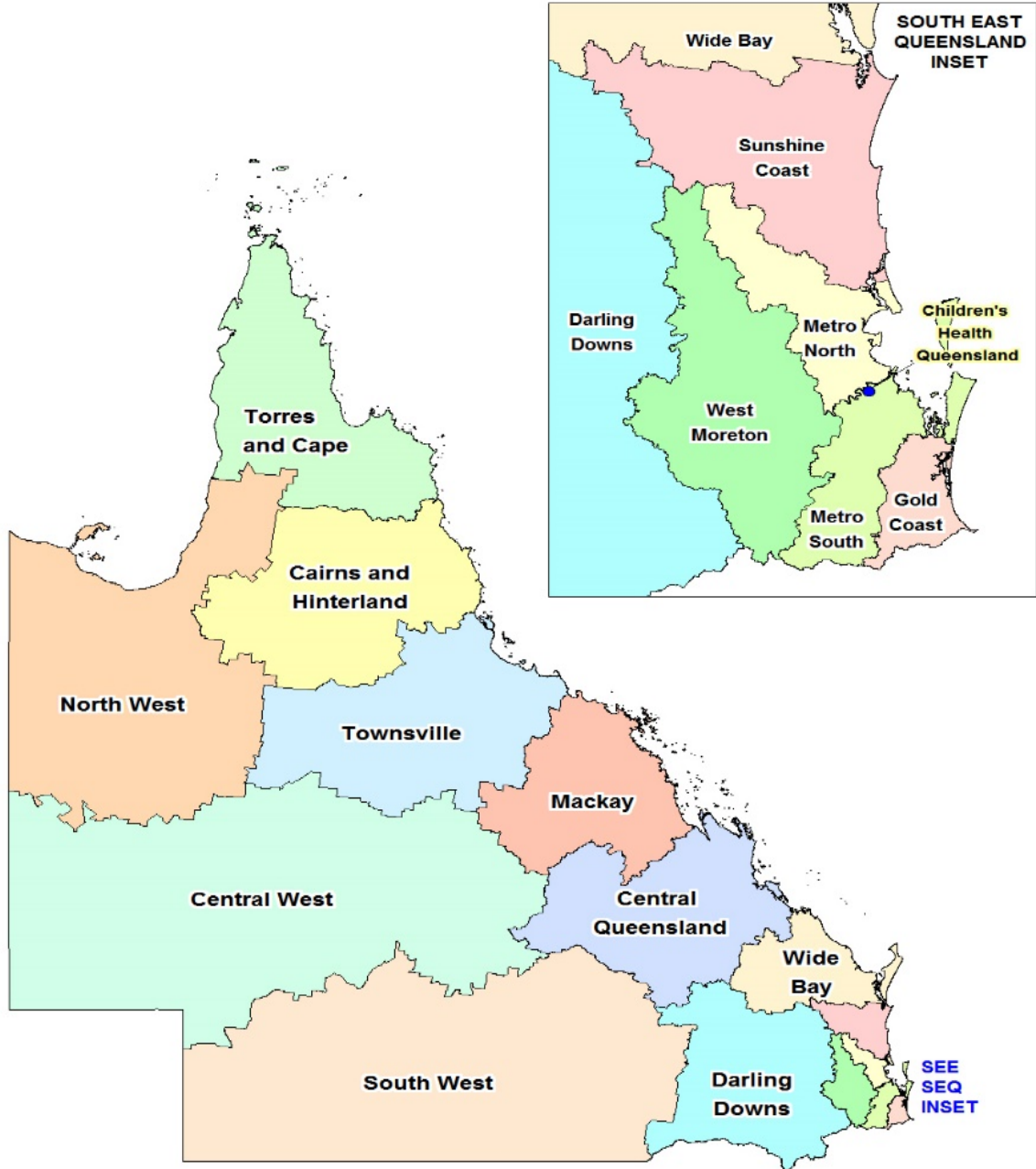
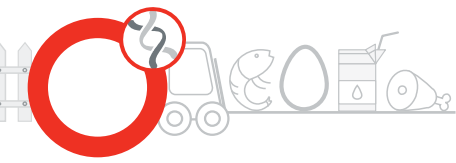
APPENDIX 4: QLD Health Contact List and Public Health Unit Areas

Environmental Health Quick Reference

OFFICE	PHONE NUMBER:	FAX NO.
Health Protection Branch Butterfield Street HealthProtectionUnit@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 3328 9310	(07) 3328 9622
Metro North Environmental Health EH_Brisbanenorth@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 3624 1111	(07) 3624 1159
Metro South Environmental Health EH.metrosouth@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 3156 4000	(07) 3156 4045
Cairns Environmental Health EH.Cairns@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4226 5555	(07) 4031 1440
Central Queensland Environmental Health EH_centralqueensland@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4920 6989	(07) 4921 3230
Central West Environmental Health	(07) 4658 4790	(07) 4658 4709
Darling Downs Environmental Health EH_Darlingdowns@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4699 8240	(07) 4699 8477
Gold Coast Environmental Health EH_GoldCoast@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 5667 3200	(07) 5667 3281
Mackay Environmental Health EH_Mackay@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4885 5800	(07) 4885 5819
Sunshine Coast Environmental Health EH_SunshineCoast@health.qld.gov.au	1300 017 190	
Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Environmental Health	(07) 4069 0436	(07) 4069 2862
Townsville Environmental Health EH_Townsville@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4433 6900	(07) 4433 6926
Townsville - Mt Isa Environmental Health TRS-ADMIN-MPHU@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4744 7178	(07) 4744 9124
West Moreton Environmental Health EH_WestMoreton@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 3818 4700	(07) 3818 4701
Wide Bay – Bundaberg Environmental Health EH_WideBay@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4303 7503	(07) 4303 7599
Wide Bay - Hervey Bay Environmental Health EH_WideBay@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 4184 1800	(07) 4184 1809

For more information, refer to:

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units>





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